1843 Flood and Tornado of Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Aug 11, 1843 Chester, Pennsylvania (Delaware County)

DELAWARE COUNTY REPUBLICAN

GREAT FLOOD, - TORNADO, - DESTRUCTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY IN DELAWARE COUNTY.

Our county was visited on Saturday evening last, by the most destructive and afflicting storm that was ever known. It rained for several hours most tremendously, and although a rise in the creeks might have been expected, a flood could not be apprehended.

In the upper sections of the county, the rain was accompanied by a tornado, which leveled to the earth, the largest trees, tore away fences, and scattered everything within its range. The small streams were swollen immediately, and horses drowned in attempting to pass them.

At about six o'clock, in the evening, the several creeks in the county, rose to an unprecedented height, and the waters rushed with an impetuosity that knew no restraint, onward to the Delaware, carrying everything before it.

Houses, vessels, machinery, timber, boats, dams, mills, factories, bridges, stacks of hay, trees, carriages, carts, furniture, in fact everything gave way before the mighty torrent.

The water rose in this borough in about one hour, twenty three feet - the rise was greater on the several creeks, higher up the stream.

We will instance as many particulars of the loss by this great flood, as our limited means will allow, as we are almost entirely cut off from information for many parts of our county, by reason of the destruction of bridges:

The lumber Yard of Mr. William Eyre, Jr. together with his wharf on Chester creek, was swept off and entirely destroyed.
Loss $2000.

The coal (about 150 tons) of Messrs. J.P. & W. Eyre, Jr. was swept away and is a total loss. The store House of the Messrs. Eyre's, has also suffered very materially, and the goods swept out of it. Their loss cannot be less than $2500.

The stable and sheds belonging to Mrs. Engle, are destroyed.
Loss $500.

The stone kitchen of Mr. Kerlin, with other out buildings, and the portico of his mansion house was carried off and are entirely lost, and with the damage done to the meadow of Mr. Kerlin, and the loss of a tenant house, he has sustained injury to the amount of $5000.

Mr. William Benton, who occupied the tenant house, a poor but industrious man, lost all that he possessed in this flood, except the clothes which covered his back at the time.

The Tan Yard of Mr. William Brobson, is entirely lost. His loss is $5000.

A large amount of goods in the store house and cellars of Mr. Jesse M. Eyre, were covered with water and destroyed. His loss must exceed $1500.

The Pattern Shop of Mr. Jacob G. Kitts, was carried away by the flood, and patterns worth over $5000, lost.

The wharves belonging to the heirs of Mr. Hart, and to the heirs of Mr. Ephraim Pearson, were swept away. Loss $300.

The stable and slaughter house of Mrs. Mary Richards, were carried off and lodged in the street some distance below, in a ruined condition.

The cellars of Mr. Deshong, Mrs. Eyre, Mr. Rulon, Mr. Long, Mr. Ladomus, and many others, were filled and much property injured and destroyed.

One of the piers belonging to the United States, has been very much injured, the large coping stone on the western side being displaced and the earth much washed. It will require an outlay of $300 to repair the pier.

The railroad bridge over Chester creek, and a portion of the embankment, was washed away. Loss $5000.

The old chain bridge over Chester creek, the western abutment and a considerable portion of the road, were swept away by the flood. Damage $4000.

Fences, gardens, furniture, goods, and vast quantities of property, other than the above, have been destroyed.

Source: Delaware County Republican (held at Delaware County Historical Society, Media, PA).
This transcript of the original is in a binder at the Springfield Library. Extracted from there by Carla Welsh.

Photo Source: You can see this from the street on the white building by Crum Creek/Beatty Road, Springfield/Media border, PA. The building has this marker, plus another marker "Springfield Water Company's Pumping Station 1892." Not sure of exact address, but it is near 959 Beatty Road.